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Perception of Media Contents, Status and Role in Czechoslovakia in 1977–1989

Diploma thesis

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Abstract

This thesis called *Perception of Media Contents, Status and Role in Czechoslovakia in 1977–1989* analyzes possible principles and circumstances of perceiving the role of the media in a specific environment of the normalisation period using methods of oral history. Furthermore, the thesis examines the function of the media in the everyday life of normalisation households and identifies the sources of images responsible for bipolarization of the outside world and their nature. It also deals with the public view on the importance of free media for the functioning of a democratic society. Last but not least, the thesis tracks the possibility of obtaining information from official, unofficial and foreign media.

To be able to conduct the above mentioned analyses, the base of this thesis lie in historiography, several chapters deal with formal and informal pressure exerted on the official media sources and circumstances of foreign media broadcast on the Czechoslovak territory. We do not omit the international context of the period 1977-1989 and include notes on activities of the opposition and following measures taken by the régime.

According to this research media (mainly TV) constituted the irreplaceable role in the everyday life in the era of normalisation. The media had a great impact on the time schedule or they were the important part of this schedule. The narrators confirmed they had tended to the apolitical media contents, particular TV series, sports or lessure time topics. Most of narrators did not accept the Orwellian newspeak of the normalisation, which also became one of the instruments of isolation of the political capital.

The narrators often talked about ther ability to filter out the ideological part of the media content and focused just on the relevant parts of the news. For the creating of views on the opposition, the campaign of the estabilishment media was one of main sources for the narrators.

That influenced even those who sympathized with the opposition. One of the important sources was also the foreign radio.

The establishment media was also very important for the perception of the USA and all the West states. This media point of view is the third most important influence, right after the personal or family experience. The USA was the symbol of luxury and wealth, that arouse people's envy. The USSR was the clear symbol of the occupants.

The goal of this thesis is to evaluate which areas of examining media history benefit most from the method of oral history and aims to contribute to its emancipation within current historiography, mainly in the field of recent history.